

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 902-4111

For Release: Immediate
Date: Tuesday, July 18, 2006

Contact: Governor's Communications Office
Phone: 360-902-4136
Department of Agriculture
Jason Kelly, 360-902-1815

Governor Gregoire Requests Federal Disaster Assistance for Farmers in Five Washington Counties

OLYMPIA – Governor Chris Gregoire today asked United States Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns to designate five counties in Washington as farm disaster areas, making farmers eligible for emergency low-interest loans. Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Lincoln and Okanogan counties experienced crop losses due to weather related losses during a severe storm on July 4-6.

“I have seen initial reports of significant damage to apple, pear and cherry orchards, as well as reports of damaged wheat, potatoes and hay,” said Governor Gregoire. “We need this disaster declaration so we can learn the full extent of the damage and begin the process of recovery. I have urged Secretary Johanns to act quickly on this request so our farmers can receive timely aid.”

The damage to orchards and field crops was the result of excessive rain, high winds, hail and lightning, followed in some areas by excessive heat. These events severely affected a number of Washington agricultural producers in certain areas, but the overall condition of most crops continues to be very good.

The declaration could provide emergency low-interest USDA Farm Service Agency loans to cover production and farm property losses to farmers in the primary counties as well as adjoining counties.

###